

Division of Public Health Partners With Construction Industry to Provide Lifesaving Narcan to Workers

NEWARK, DE (Nov. 20, 2021) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) has partnered with the state's construction industry to drive down the number of drug overdose deaths in Delaware. In partnership with Bancroft Construction, the DPH Office of Health Crisis Response held a Narcan distribution event Thursday, Nov. 18, for Bancroft workers at the University of Delaware *FinTech* job site.

This partnership also has allowed DPH to provide construction supervisors with training about overdose, the stigma associated with addiction, and Narcan administration for over 20 Bancroft Construction supervisors. The distribution event was the first time DPH was able to get Narcan directly into the hands of the workers who are at risk of overdose or who may find themselves in a life-saving position to help others.

"This was a small step in the right direction to help combat drug overdose deaths," said Kate Brookins, Director of the DPH Office of Health Crisis Response. "The overdose epidemic is a nationwide public health emergency that impacts all of our communities in Delaware, but the construction industry is particularly hard-hit."

There were 447 drug overdose deaths across the state in 2020, according to the Delaware Division of Forensic Science. As of 2019, Delaware had the second-highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the country, with 48 deaths per 100,000 people, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

The DPH *Drug Overdose Mortality Surveillance Report* released

in August 2019 showed 23% of overdose deaths in 2017 were identified as working in the construction industry. The top two occupational industries of jobs held by males who died of a drug overdose were construction (36%) and the installation, maintenance, and repair industry (9.1%; includes mechanics, HVAC repair, engine repair, maintenance, and others).

To date, the Office of Health Crisis Response has partnered with Bancroft and other major construction companies and groups to offer training about the stigma associated with addiction and administering Narcan. The Office is also in the process of developing a toolkit specifically geared toward individuals in this industry to better assist organizations in overdose awareness and prevention.

Narcan is the brand name of naloxone, a medication that can reverse the effects of opioids in an overdose situation and can potentially save a life. People who witness an overdose should also call 9-1-1 and wait for medical help to arrive.

Narcan is available at most pharmacies in Delaware through a standing order, and a prescription from an individual's doctor is not needed. Individuals can also visit www.HelpIsHereDe.com to receive overdose training and Narcan through the mail, or they can visit one of the Department of Health and Social Services' [Bridge Clinics](#) to get a free Narcan kit. The public is encouraged to download the free OpiRescue DE smartphone app, which provides step-by-step instructions on how to start an overdose rescue and locations of pharmacies that carry naloxone.

If you or a loved one is struggling with substance use disorder, call DHSS' Delaware Hope Line to be connected to trained crisis professionals who can discuss treatment options at 1-833-9-HOPEDE (1-833-946-7333). Individuals and families also can visit DHSS' website, www.HelpIsHereDE.com, to find

addiction treatment and recovery services in Delaware or nearby states.